

Wayne Allard

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For Release:
January 28, 2005

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SENATOR ALLARD APPLAUDS FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE DECISION TO DELIST PREBLE'S MOUSE

Washington, D.C. - U.S. Senator Wayne Allard (R-Colorado) applauded the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's decision to take the Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse off its list of threatened species. The decision to de-list the Preble's mouse was announced Friday by U.S. Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton.

Senator Allard had been urging Secretary Norton to delist the mouse for more than a year. The Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse was listed as a threatened species in 1998 and given protection under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). In December of 2003, the Fish and Wildlife Service received petitions to delist the species from the State of Wyoming's Office of the Governor and Coloradans for Water Conservation and Development. Both petitions cited a genetic study that determined there is no basis for listing the Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse as a separate species.

"Today's decision points to one of the key problems with the Endangered Species Act: It does not fully rely on sound science," Senator Allard said. "Although the act has noble goals, listing errors harm not only the credibility of the Act, but also harm people such as farmers and ranchers whose lives are affected by a faulty species listing. I will work to resolve this issue in the 109th Congress."

Originally it was thought that the Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse was a unique species that needed protection. However, new data has emerged suggesting that the mouse is, in fact identical to the Bear Lodge Meadow Jumping Mouse. These findings are based on research conducted by the Denver Museum of Nature and Science. If this data stands up to peer review, Preble's mouse would no longer need ESA protection.

"This is great news for Coloradans, as many of our communities have been negatively affected by the designation of Preble's critical habitat throughout Colorado," Senator Allard said. "These adverse effects could have been avoided had the Endangered Species Act focused on the use of sound science. We need to find a way to remove this stumbling block that has stymied people, businesses, and government in our state."